Wage growth steady in March quarter

Media Release

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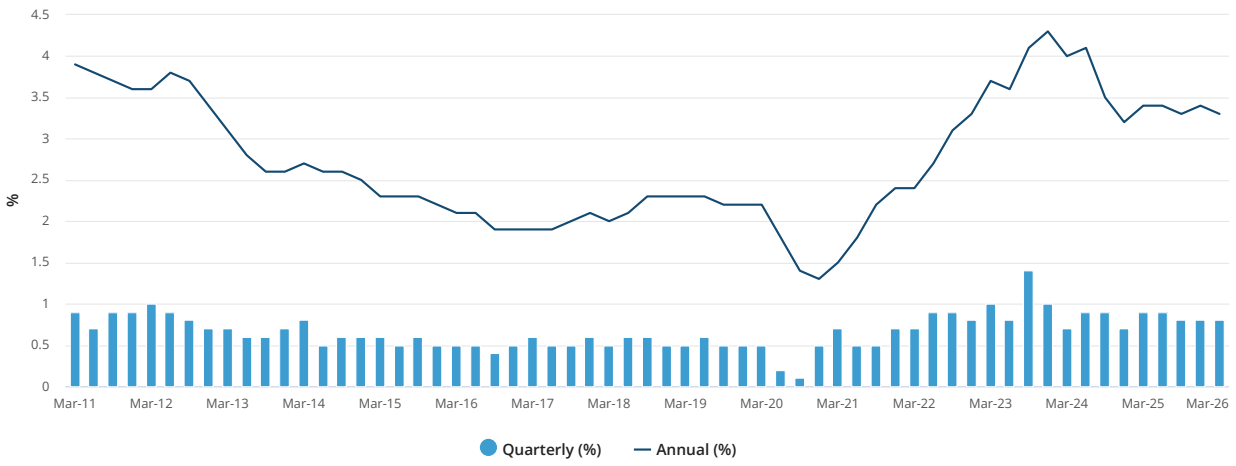
Source:
Wage Price Index, Australia, March 2026 (/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/wage-price-index-australia/mar-2026)

The Wage Price Index (WPI) rose 0.8 per cent in the March quarter 2026 and 3.3 per cent annually, according to seasonally adjusted data released by Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) today.

Sue-Ellen Luke, ABS head of prices statistics, said: 'Quarterly wage growth has remained steady at 0.8 per cent since September quarter 2025. Annual growth in wages was 3.3 per cent, largely unchanged from 3.4 per cent in December quarter 2025.'

All sector WPI, quarterly and annual movement (%), seasonally adjusted (a)



a. See Interpretation of index numbers, Percentage change and rounding on the Methodology (https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/wage-price-index-australia-methodology/mar-2026#interpretation-of-index-numbers) page.

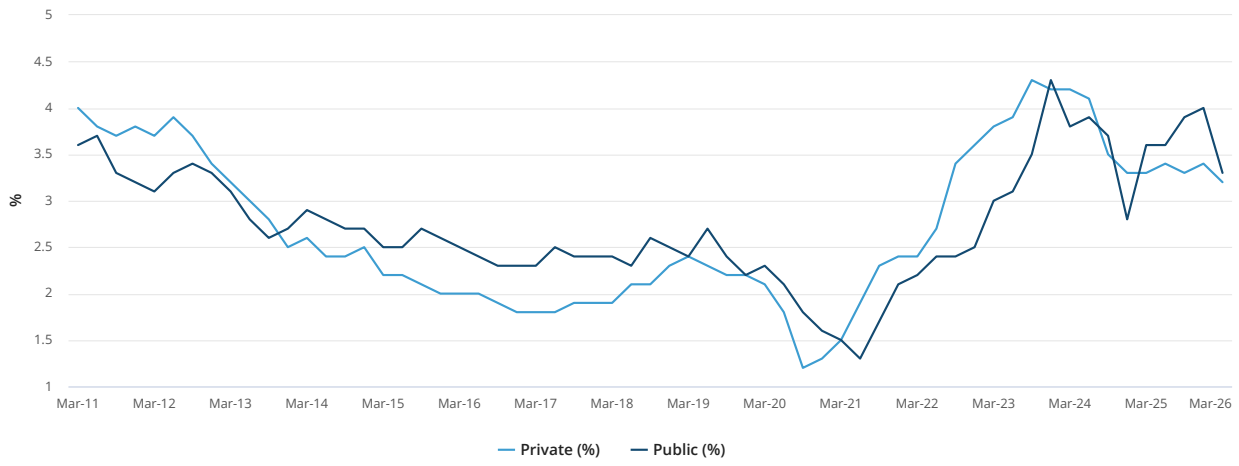
On an annual basis, public sector wages have grown at a faster pace than in the private sector for a fifth consecutive

quarter, though the gap has narrowed substantially.

Annual private sector wages rose 3.2 per cent in the year to March quarter 2026, compared to the 3.3 per cent observed at the same time last year. Annual public sector wage growth was 3.3 per cent in the year to March 2026, lower than the 3.6 per cent at the same time last year.

Ms Luke said, 'The Healthcare and social assistance industry had the largest contribution to wages growth. It rose 0.7 per cent this quarter. A major Commonwealth funded initiative in the Early Childhood Education and Care (https://www.fairwork.gov.au/newsroom/news/early-childhood-education-and-care-worker-retention-payment) workforce saw wage rises paid in the private sector for this industry, while Queensland hospital health care workers were the main driver of public growth.'

Annual wage growth by sector, seasonally adjusted (a)



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See our other insight and supporting graphs in our Wage Price Index, Australia, March quarter 2026 publication (https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/wage-price-index-australia/latest-release) .

Media notes

- Please attribute the 'Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)' when using our data.
- All figures in this release are seasonally adjusted, unless otherwise specified.
- March quarter 2026 Wage Price Index data captures wages for the last pay period ending on or before the third Friday of the middle month (February) of the quarter.
- The WPI is designed to measure the change over time in the price of wages and salaries (i.e. a pure price

change, unaffected by the changes in the quality or quantity of work performed or the composition of the workforce).

- To learn more about different measures of wages change, their purpose and how to use them, see our Earnings guide (https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/understanding-statistics/guide-labour-statistics/earnings-guide) . It provides summary information on our various earnings measures including the Wage Price Index.
- For any media requests, email media@abs.gov.au (mailto:media@abs.gov.au) or call 1300 175 070 (9am-5pm Canberra time) with your questions and deadline.
- Explore our Data Crash Course (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=le2K3PNejU4&list=PLR8_RxifMwL4JQTxYclMANzga67VBlyhj&index=11) for guidance on finding and interpreting ABS data, and subscribe to our release notifications (https://www4.abs.gov.au/ausstats/notifications.NSF/Web+Pages/ABS+Email+Notification+Service?OpenDocument) to stay updated.
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